

**Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Status of the Colleges of the Arts
and Sciences**

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1. Charge to the Committee

In February 2002, Provost Edward J. Ray appointed an Ad Hoc Committee on the Status of the Colleges of the Arts and Sciences. Each of the five arts and sciences colleges is represented on the Committee by a senior faculty member. In addition, the Committee includes the dean of the College of Human Ecology, an associate dean from the College of Engineering, a senior faculty member from the College of Medicine and Public Health who is a current member of the University Senate's Council on Academic Affairs and, as liaisons to the Office of Academic Affairs, the Senior Vice Provost and the Vice Provost for Curriculum and Institutional Relations. The committee was chaired initially by former president Edward H. Jennings. When he assumed the interim presidency, Joe Ferrar from the Department of Mathematics became chair with Barbara Hanawalt from the Department of History assuming the role of acting chair during the summer.

In his letter of appointment to members of the Committee, Provost Ray described the charge to the Committee as follows:

In my speech to the University Senate on January 10, 2002, I indicated that to implement effectively our Academic Plan, it is essential that we have a highly visible and nationally prominent arts and sciences, and that we have a coherent, collaborative and financially sound core of arts and sciences programs of the highest possible quality. Every top tier research university has a strong arts and sciences core.

At The Ohio State University, five separate colleges make up the arts and sciences—Arts, Biological Sciences, Humanities, Mathematical and Physical Sciences, and Social and Behavioral Sciences. They represent the core of our undergraduate curriculum—the majority of courses in the general education curriculum instruction and a large proportion of our undergraduate major and minor programs. Some of our strongest research and graduate programs are found in these colleges. They have received the majority of the University's Selective Investment and Academic Enrichment awards. Clearly we already have great strength on which to build in many disciplines.

However, we have not taken maximum advantage of the synergies that can exist among those units and programs. We need to examine whether or not the Arts and Sciences colleges are appropriately configured for implementing the Academic Plan and for working collaboratively to strengthen our national reputation. I am interested in developing a plan for the advancement of the Colleges of the Arts and Sciences that will help differentiate between genuine opportunities for progress and changes that may not serve our long-term interests. Your work is an important first step.

Given these considerations, the charge to the Committee is to assess the current status of, and make recommendations regarding three broad areas:

- The optimal configuration of the Colleges of the Arts and Sciences.
- Whether the academic units and programs within the colleges are assigned to the appropriate colleges.
- What authority should reside with the Executive Dean of the Arts and Sciences, and whether or not this should be a separate position.

2. Background Information

In order to understand the issues, the committee:

1. Reviewed the Academic Plan, the rule for alteration or abolition of units, the current structure of each of the colleges in the arts and sciences, the history of the formation of the Colleges of the Arts and Sciences, and enrollment patterns, academic program offerings, patterns of administration, faculty size, and expenditures for each of the five colleges.
2. Reviewed the organizational structure of our benchmark institutions: University of Arizona, University of California Los Angeles, University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana, University of Michigan, University of Minnesota, Pennsylvania State University, University of Texas at Austin, University of Washington, and University of Wisconsin-Madison.
3. Reviewed a summary of rankings of programs at Ohio State and benchmark institutions.
4. Met separately with the deans of each of the arts and sciences colleges. The deans were asked to comment on the following topics: the college's role in undergraduate education; whether we should move to a more coherent undergraduate program within the arts and sciences; to what extent there is a common mission among the colleges and how it might be affected by structural change within or among the colleges; the strengths and weaknesses of a decentralized budgeting system as compared to a centralized budgeting system for the collectivity of the arts and sciences; the culture within the college with respect to promotion and tenure procedures; ideas about possible changes of the location of departments and schools within and among colleges; and the status of the current position of executive dean for the arts and sciences and whether or how it should change.
5. Held video conference calls or telephone conference calls with the chancellor of the University of Wisconsin, the chancellor of the University of Illinois, the provost of the college of letters and sciences at UCLA, the dean of the college of the arts and sciences at the University of Washington, the director of the School of Music at the University of Minnesota, and the chair of the Department of Mathematics at UCLA. The goal of the interviews was to determine how different reporting structures operated at different levels within these organizations.
6. Reviewed an analysis of the Arts and Sciences Colleges' office administrative structures at Ohio State compared to those at several of the benchmark and CIC institutions.

Throughout this process, the committee was kept apprised of other activity relating to the arts and sciences that Michael Hogan, in his role as executive dean for the arts and sciences, was simultaneously overseeing at the request of Provost Ray. In particular, as of July 1, 2002, development operations for the Arts and Sciences Colleges were consolidated under an assistant vice president for arts and sciences development who reports jointly to the executive dean for the arts and sciences and the vice president for university development.

3. Criteria for Optimality

Prior to consideration of specific alternatives for the configuration of the arts and sciences at Ohio State, the committee drew up a short list of measures of the success of any configuration. They are:

- An optimal configuration will provide a strong advocate for the Arts and Sciences point of view in the highest administrative circles of the university, reflecting the reality that the Arts and Sciences contribute 40% of Ohio State's faculty, 84% of the total hours of lower division instruction, 47% of Ohio State's bachelors degree recipients and 50% of the Ph.D. recipients.
- Already home to several research and graduate programs ranked among the top 20 in the United States by the National Research Council, the Arts and Sciences Colleges will play a leading role in the attainment of the goals of Ohio State's 20-10 Plan.
- The Arts and Sciences Colleges will be seen as an intellectually stimulating home to motivated undergraduate students, offering a plethora of disciplinary major programs and cross disciplinary programs, as well as providing the broader undergraduate student body with core courses on which the General Education Curriculum is based.
- Activities that emphasize the commonalities of the arts and sciences disciplines, such as cooperative activities among the colleges/departments both in faculty research and in undergraduate programs of study, will be rewarded.
- The Arts and Sciences will lead the way in recruiting "top 10%" high school students to attend Ohio State, closing the performance gap between Ohio State and higher ranked benchmark institutions.

4. Administrative Responsibilities Related to the Arts and Sciences

Subsequent to the discussion of the characteristics of an optimal configuration for the Arts and Sciences, the committee identified the most critical administrative responsibilities that would normally fall under the purview of Arts and Sciences administrators. They are:

- Budget and fiscal matters
- Personnel/Promotion and tenure
- Research and Graduate Programs
- Curriculum oversight
- Undergraduate advising
- Undergraduate recruitment
- Development and fundraising
- Outreach/Engagement

5. Feasible Alternative Configurations

A study of the organizational charts of our benchmark institutions, interviews with our current Arts and Sciences deans, and interviews with selected individuals from benchmark institutions with varying Arts and Sciences configurations suggested three alternative configurations, each of which is represented in at least one benchmark institution:

- **Decentralized structure:** The departments and schools aligned with Arts and Sciences are grouped into autonomous colleges, each with a dean who reports directly to the provost (Arizona, Minnesota, Ohio State, Penn State, Texas).
- **Fully centralized structure:** A single College of the Arts and Sciences, headed by a dean, encompasses all Arts and Sciences aligned departments and schools. Each department chair/school director reports directly to the dean (Illinois, Michigan).
- **Federation of colleges:** The departments and schools aligned with Arts and Sciences are grouped into colleges, each headed by a dean. These colleges are further combined into an Arts and Sciences federation reporting to a person whose title varies depending on the university - at UCLA: Provost, College of Letters and Science; at Washington: Dean, College of Arts and Sciences; and at Wisconsin: Dean, College of Letters and Sciences. In the Ohio State University organizational structure the person in charge of the federation would be equivalent to Executive Dean and Vice President for the Arts and Sciences. That person then reports to the provost.

Note 1: Until 1968 Arts and Sciences at Ohio State had a fully centralized structure, though several academic units now in the Arts and Sciences were then in other colleges such as Agriculture, Commerce and Administration, or Education.

Note 2: The current Ohio State Arts and Sciences structure is not completely decentralized. Currently, one of the Arts and Sciences deans is designated as executive dean by the provost. The executive dean functions as convener and chair of meetings of the Arts and Sciences deans and as a conduit of information between the Arts and Sciences deans and the provost. Moreover, the newly adopted centralized Arts and Sciences Development Plan places the executive dean in a leading role in development activities for all of the Arts and Sciences.

Note 3: While all of the peer institutions considered, except Arizona, ranked in the top 25 public universities in the 2002 US News Survey, the institutions with centralized or federated structures for the Arts and Sciences all ranked above the highest ranking institution with decentralized Arts and Sciences.

6. Recommendation on an Optimal Configuration and the Authority of the Executive Dean for the Arts and Sciences

The Committee recommends that the Arts and Sciences administrative configuration currently in place at Ohio State be modified to create a federation of the five current Arts and Sciences colleges headed by an Executive Dean and Vice President for the Arts and Sciences who reports to the provost and who is a member of the President's Planning Cabinet.

Specifically,

- The Colleges of Arts, Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Mathematical and Physical Sciences, and Biological Sciences, with their current complements of departments/schools remain intact as administrative units, each headed by a dean.
- An Executive Dean and Vice President for the Arts and Sciences is appointed as administrative head of the federation of Colleges of the Arts and Sciences. The five college deans report to the Executive Dean and Vice President for the Arts and Sciences, who recommends candidates for dean positions to the provost for approval, and who is responsible for coordinating the activities of the deans.
- In addition to responsibility for overseeing activities of the college deans, the Executive Dean and Vice President for the Arts and Sciences will be responsible for centralizing undergraduate advising, development, space and facilities, communications (especially as it relates to undergraduate recruitment), and Outreach/Engagement (including Arts and Sciences activities in support of the University's K-12 education initiatives).

- A federation curriculum committee will replace the current arts and sciences curriculum committee and will be expected to take an active role in setting curricular direction within the arts and sciences, and to monitor regularly the General Education Curriculum. College curriculum committees will function as subcommittees of the federation curriculum committee. The development and review of undergraduate courses and programs – from the academic unit to the federation curriculum committee - will not be subjected to any additional procedural steps from current practice as a result of this approach. Graduate-level curricular matters will follow current procedures.
- The Executive Dean and Vice President for the Arts and Sciences will be expected to play an important role in advancing interdisciplinary research and graduate programs.
- Administration of Research and Graduate programs in the Arts and Sciences will be the responsibility of the individual departments, working in concert with the Graduate School and the Office of the Vice President for Research.
- Reviews of departmental recommendations for promotion and tenure will be the responsibility of each college dean, though the Executive Dean and Vice President for the Arts and Sciences will be consulted and serve as the conduit for passing recommendations forward to the provost.
- Since it is critical both in the recruitment of a qualified Executive Dean and Vice President for the Arts and Sciences and in the recruitment of qualified college deans that the positions carry a reasonable level of budgetary responsibility, we recommend a division of budgetary authority:

The provost establishes a base budget for the federation of the Colleges of the Arts and Sciences based on the same budget restructuring principles applied university-wide (see below for transitional budgeting).

The Executive Dean and Vice President for the Arts and Sciences, after consultation with the college deans, is responsible for setting base budgets for each college with due regard for the University's commitment to budget restructuring and ongoing commitments to rebasing college budgets.

College deans will exercise full control over their budgets.

7. Rationale

In choosing between the alternatives listed above, the Committee first considered the current configuration since adoption of any other alternative would have the disadvantage of creating some level of discomfort and inconvenience for faculty and administrators as changes are initiated. Our interviews with the college deans made clear that they generally feel that the current configuration is working smoothly and effectively.

Moreover, recent Selective Investment awards to eight departments in the Arts and Sciences attest to both the quality of the graduate programs and research efforts in these departments and the likelihood that these programs will be among the leaders in attaining the goals of the 2010 Plan. On the other hand, there is no single advocate for the Arts and Sciences point of view, except in cases where the interests of all colleges converge; there is little sense of commonality of purpose among the colleges apparent to an undergraduate or prospective applicant; recruitment of “top 10%” high school students significantly lags behind that of many of our benchmark institutions; there are bureaucratic obstacles facing a student who might wish to construct a program of study which crosses college boundaries; the curriculum approval process is far from transparent to interested parties from units outside the Arts and Sciences, and the lack of centralization of the process makes approval of curricular initiatives a very time consuming process. Most telling, the system has been in effect for many years, and Ohio State is still a considerable distance from its goal to be among the world’s truly great universities.

Concluding that change to a centralized configuration is necessary if Ohio State is to aspire to the top ranks of public universities, the committee settled on the federated model for several reasons. We had serious concerns about the feasibility of a fully centralized configuration, in large part because of the extraordinary burden it would place on the Dean for the Arts and Sciences, to whom approximately 40 department chairs/school directors would report. The sheer logistics of the reporting apparatus would require valuable time which the dean could far better spend on Development, student recruitment and pressing the cause of Arts and Sciences within the university community.

The federated model positions the Executive Dean and Vice President for the Arts and Sciences in the top decision making councils of the university, thus putting the Arts and Sciences point of view in play in all major policy discussions and, in particular, promoting increased communication between the Arts and Sciences and the Vice President for Research. Centralized advising and curriculum management present obvious opportunities for putting forth a unified vision of Arts and Sciences to undergraduates and establishing barrier-free opportunities for interdisciplinary teaching and studying. Moreover, by decentralizing the day-to-day management of the departments to the college level, the Executive Dean and Vice President for the Arts and Sciences frees time to advocate for Arts and Sciences in the important recruitment and Development arenas. Thus the federated model responds affirmatively to those criteria for optimality which deal with the undergraduate program in the Arts and Sciences. It is less clear how the change to such a model would affect research and graduate programs, though we note that among our benchmark universities, those with centralized Arts and Sciences configurations have more NRC-top 20 Arts and Sciences programs than those with decentralized configurations.

The Committee gave weight, in preparing its recommendation, to the fact that creating a federated model based on the existing college structure is relatively painless for the university community since, for the most part, the necessary ingredients for success are already in place and working efficiently. Rather than facing the daunting task of taking apart the current configuration and building a new one, we propose to enhance what we

now have with the ingredients that we believe are necessary to move Ohio State to a higher plane among public universities in the United States.

8. The Price of Success

The Committee is unanimous in its opinion that several conditions must be met for a federation of colleges as outlined in the previous section to gain acceptance of the faculty and to produce meaningful improvements in the quality of the Arts and Sciences at Ohio State:

- The Executive Dean and Vice President for the Arts and Sciences must be a member of the President's Planning Cabinet.
- The Executive Dean and Vice President for the Arts and Sciences, the deans of the five colleges, and top-level administrative staff must be housed in the same building, facilitating regular interaction and fostering a sense of unity within the Arts and Sciences. This works well at other institutions (UCLA , Washington, and Wisconsin, for example) and is deemed important to their success.
- During the first years of transition from the current configuration to a federation of colleges, the budget allocation from the provost must be sufficient so that the budget allocation from the federation to each college equals or exceeds what that college would have been allocated under the current configuration, reduced by the savings in college budgets attributable to centralization of administrative functions that previously were the responsibility of colleges. In particular, commitments to increment college budgets under the provost's five year rebasing plan and Selective Investment should remain in force.
- The transitional budget allocations from the provost to the federation should also include supplementary cash allocations providing the Executive Dean and Vice President for the Arts and Sciences with discretionary funds to initiate meaningful new programs which will move the Arts and Sciences forward. Once the transition is complete, it is expected that the Executive Dean and Vice President's discretionary budget would be provided by savings from economies of scale realized in centralizing college administrative functions (See Appendix) and by a tax on annual incremental funding to the federation of the Colleges of the Arts and Sciences.
- The new administrative structure must be organized in such a way as to avoid adding any new levels to existing review processes (e.g. promotion and tenure, curriculum revision, etc.)
- Faculty must be fully consulted in planning for and implementing any change in the configuration of the Arts and Sciences.

- Particular attention must be paid in the creation of a new configuration to insure that not only the Arts and Sciences undergraduate program, but also the research and graduate programs of the Arts and Sciences Colleges, are moved forward.
- The Executive Dean and Vice President for the Arts and Sciences should not serve simultaneously as dean of one of the constituent colleges.

9. Distribution of Arts and Sciences Departments/Schools Among Colleges

The composition of the individual colleges within the Arts and Sciences has remained quite stable since their creation in 1968. The Committee discussed with each college dean her/his opinion of what, if any, realignment of departments among colleges would improve the functioning of the colleges and/or the Arts and Sciences as a whole. Those discussions led to identification of two important criteria that influence the effectiveness of a college:

- The number of departments/schools in a college should be small enough that the dean can be knowledgeable about each unit and meet regularly with the chair/director.
- Each department/school in a given college should have common intellectual bonds with many, if not all, of the other departments, and all should share a common academic culture.

The college deans appear to be comfortable with the current distribution of programs among the colleges and reported no strong sentiment among their faculty to institute changes.

Two ideas were presented for consideration: merger of the College of Biological Sciences with the College of Mathematical and Physical Sciences to form a College of Science; and separation of the College of Arts from the Arts and Sciences cluster to form a free-standing college, perhaps aligned with the Professional College cluster. We believe that a good argument could be made for either of these realignment proposals especially since the more highly-ranked fine arts and music programs tend to be in free-standing colleges or schools, and note that Colleges of Science and free-standing Colleges of Fine Arts are common among our benchmark institutions. The Committee also briefly considered a suggestion that the Colleges of Humanities and Social and Behavioral Sciences could be combined into a single college, though such a union would appear to fail both of the criteria set forth above.

10. Recommendations Regarding Composition of the Colleges within Arts and Sciences

The Committee feels that the current distribution of departments and schools among the five colleges of the Arts and Sciences is working well. While it may be advisable in the future to revisit the possibility of realignment, such action at this time would complicate efforts to move expeditiously to a centralized structure for the Arts and Sciences. We

recommend no changes in alignment of colleges until such a centralized structure has been instituted and its effects on the interactions among departments/schools measured. The new federation of Colleges of the Arts and Sciences should re-address this issue later, after a careful assessment of the outcome of the change in structure.

11. Concluding Observation

In our conversations with representatives of benchmark universities, there was one recurring theme; the effectiveness of their organizational structure for the Arts and Sciences is a consequence of the quality of the people in leadership positions. Simple adoption of a federated structure for the Arts and Sciences may have little effect in moving Ohio State towards the goals of the Academic Plan if the University does not proceed carefully in the selection of an Executive Dean and Vice President who, on the one hand, can speak to the faculty and administration with the authority of an established scholar and, on the other hand, is an adept judge of people, who can build a cohesive, dynamic team of deans to provide the day to day leadership of the colleges.